

MASS. EA40.2: Q 21/4

Quabbin Park And Reservation

Many Waters...Many Uses

UMASS/AMHERST



312066016587757

UMENT DOCUMENT
COLLECTION

JUN 15 1998

University of Massachusetts
Depository Copy





A team of dedicated professionals works together to manage Quabbin. The State Police stationed at Quabbin are responsible for patrolling the land and water and enforcing rules and environmental laws. The Division has a crew of foresters and a wildlife biologist who are responsible for managing the forest and wildlife. A water testing program protects the purity of the water, and a staff of engineers monitors water levels and flow. Skilled craftsmen and laborers maintain the highly used fishing areas and Quabbin Park. The combined efforts of these people protect Quabbin's very special qualities.

Quabbin comes from a Nipmuc Indian word meaning "many waters". When the Nipmucs lived in the area, numerous streams and three branches of the Swift River flowed through the valley. Today, the reservoir is the main source of the 300 million gallons of water available for use each day by nearly half the population of Massachusetts.

From River to Reservoir

When engineers began searching during the early 1900's for a site for a reservoir to quench Boston's thirst, they were drawn to the Swift River Valley. The high hills surrounding the valley would make natural boundaries for a reservoir. The valley itself was broad and deep, scoured by the glaciers that covered New England thousands of years ago. The waters of



the river and feeder streams would provide pure water to meet the city's needs.

Construction of the reservoir began in 1927, and by 1939 the waters of the Swift River were slowly rising behind the newly completed Winsor Dam, an earth-filled structure 2,640 feet long, rising 170 feet above the riverbed. Seven years later the water first flowed over the spillway. The slightly smaller Goodnough Dike dammed the waters of Beaver Brook. Together, these dams hold back over 412 billion gallons of water; twenty million gallons must be released below the dam each day to maintain the flow of the Swift River. The water is distributed throughout the metropolitan Boston area through 117 miles of pipeline and aqueduct tunneled through bedrock 200 feet below the earth's surface. Three Western Massachusetts communities are also supplied with Quabbin through the Chicopee Valley Aqueduct. The Massachusetts Water Resources Authority, created in 1984, is responsible for the treatment and distribution of the water, and the development of new water supplies.

Quabbin Reservation protects over 120 square miles of land and water. The pristine qualities of the watershed are a source of enjoyment for thousands of visitors, and are valuable to the numerous wildlife species found here. Quabbin Park and Reservation are natural resources unequalled in New England; careful management and use will protect them for the future.

The Silent Valley

The waters of Quabbin Reservoir cover many traces of the four towns and numerous villages that once prospered in the Swift River Valley. All that remains of Dana, Enfield, Prescott and Greenwich (Green-wich) are cellar holes, stone walls, and roads that disappear beneath the waters of the reservoir. The story of these towns is similar to that of most small New England communities . . . except for the last chapter.

Nipmuc Indians lived in and hunted throughout the valley before European settlers began clearing the land and farming the valley's rich soils in the early 1700's. The Indians left their camps behind as the land became unable to support the two cultures' differing lifestyles.

By the later part of the 19th century the towns were lively and productive. A branch of the Boston and Albany railroad carried passengers between Athol and Springfield. Known as the "Rabbit Line" because of the number of stops, or short hops it made, the train took three and



a half hours to complete the fifty mile trip. Inns and taverns catered to travelers, while industries such as the Swift River Box Company provided work for local residents. Palm-leaf hats, Shaker bonnets, and soapstone footwarmers were made in Dana. Dana and Greenwich were popular with summer visitors, and residents of Prescott relied on farming to provide their incomes. Enfield was originally part of Greenwich; many mills were located there, and it was considered the wealthiest town in the valley.

Westward expansion and industrialization caused the decline of many rural New England towns, and those in the Swift River Valley did not escape the economic hardships and decrease in population as business and residents were drawn to the opportunities offered elsewhere. Dana, Enfield, Prescott and Greenwich were dealt a final blow when rumors implying the towns would be flooded began to circulate. Property values decreased, and the Great Depression added its financial strain to the problems facing these small communities.



Quabbin Reservoir



PureWater

A Service of the
Metropolitan
District
Commission



Rules

For the Protection of the many special resource values of the Quabbin Reservation and its watershed such as: Public Water Supply, Forestry, Wildlife Sanctuary, Historic Site and Artifacts, the following are

STRICTLY PROHIBITED:

- Disposing of human waste, refuse, or litter anywhere except where appropriate receptacles are provided.
- Alcoholic beverages.
- Swimming and wading.
- All fires.
- Horses, dogs, and all other domestic animals.
- Camping, skiing, hunting, trapping, and firearms.
- Trespassing in posted restricted areas and on the ice.
- Removal of historic artifacts or natural resources.

ACCESS IS RESTRICTED TO HOURS POSTED AT GATES AND ENTRANCES.

ALLOWED IN DESIGNATED AREAS:

- Fishing
- Bicycling
- Hiking
- Picnicking (without fires or grills)

PROTECT YOUR ACCESS PRIVILEGE BY OBEYING THE ABOVE RULES. PLEASE REPORT ALL VIOLATIONS TO STATE POLICE AT 413-323-7561.

This brochure is published by:

The Friends of Quabbin, Inc. as a service to the Metropolitan District Commission.

Suggest Donation-\$.25

Prepared by:

CANEPI: The Cooperating Association for New England Parks, Inc.; RFD 1, Orange, MA 01364

Photography by:

Les Campbell; including historical reproduction from MDC files.

